United Nations S/PV.8379

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8379th meeting

Tuesday, 23 October 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Soliz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Sipaco Ribala
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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18-33580 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: On 21 September, I warned the Council that we were losing the fight against famine in Yemen (see S/PV.8361). Since then, the situation has worsened. That is why, as required by resolution 2417 (2018), which the Council adopted in May, we issued the white note that was circulated late last week. In line with our obligations under the Council's resolution, my briefing today focuses on the risk of famine.

Famines are mercifully rare in the modern world. They used to be ubiquitous and a relatively common occurrence all over the world throughout more than 99 per cent of human history. It is actually a spectacular feature of progress in our era that only two famines have been declared in the past 20 years — the one that took the lives of a quarter of a million Somalis in 2011 and the famine declared last year that affected a few tens of thousands of people in South Sudan. It is that recent progress that makes what we now face in Yemen so shocking. A famine is declared when the three thresholds of food insecurity, acute malnutrition and mortality are all breached together. The three criteria are that at least one household in five faces an extreme lack of food, that more than 30 per cent of children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition or wasting, and that at least two out of every 10,000 people are dying each and every day.

Assessments conducted a year ago identified 107 out of Yemen's 333 districts to be at risk of famine, where two of those three thresholds were either already exceeded or dangerously close to being so. A further assessment exercise is now under way across the country and the initial results are expected in mid-November. It has been more difficult to confirm the position on the third criteria — the number of deaths due to starvation or starvation-related disease. However, while mortality-related data is difficult to collect and triangulate, health workers are pointing to the rising number of deaths linked to food-related factors.

We also know that many deaths are hidden. Only half of the health facilities in Yemen are functioning and many Yemenis are too poor to access the ones that are open. Therefore, unable to reach care, people often simply die at home. Very few families report those deaths and the stories of those people go unrecorded. However, at the end of last year, one aid agency estimated that 130 children under the age of five were dying every day from extreme hunger and disease — nearly 50,000 little children during the course of the year. While we await the results of the assessments that are now under way, we already know that a further year of war and economic crisis have pushed millions more Yemenis towards famine.

So, just to be clear, my assessment and advice to the Council is that there is now a clear and present danger of an imminent and great big famine engulfing Yemen — much bigger than anything that any professionals in this field have seen during their working lives. Some people, perhaps including members of the Council, will be thinking, "Hang on a minute. They have told us this before and it did not happen". That is correct. We warned of famine in Yemen at the beginning of last year as part of the Secretary-General's call to action, which also flagged the risk in Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria. The response was a dramatic scaling up of the United Nations coordinated relief effort, which helped to mitigate the worst impact of the crisis at the time. I issued a similar warning when I briefed the Council on 8 November last year on the likely effect of the economic blockade that had just been imposed by the international coalition following missile attacks on Riyadh from inside Yemen. The blockade was removed and the supervised imports of food, fuel and medicines resumed through the Red Sea ports. What I am telling the Council today is that the situation is now much graver than on either of those two occasions.

Why is that? First, it is due to the sheer number of people at risk. In my update to the Council last month, I said that an additional 3.5 million people were likely to become severely food insecure in the months ahead, in addition to the 8 million that we were already reaching each month through the United Nations coordinated response effort. That is a total of 11 million people. That is what I said on 21 September. We now think that that estimate was wrong. Our revised assessment, which is the result of new survey work and analysis, is that the total number of people facing pre-famine conditions — meaning that they are entirely reliant on external aid for survival — could soon reach not 11 million, but 14 million. That is half of the total population of the country.

Secondly, beyond the sheer numbers, while millions of people have been surviving on emergency food assistance for years, the help that they get is enough merely to survive, not to thrive. The toll is unbearably high. The immune systems of the millions of people who have been on survival support for years on end are now literally collapsing, making them — especially children and the elderly — more likely to succumb to malnutrition, cholera and other diseases.

Last month, I explained the two recent developments that have deepened the crisis: first, the intensification of fighting around Al-Hudaydah, choking the lifeline that the aid operation and commercial imports rely on; and secondly, the recent further collapse of the economy. What has happened since then on those two issues? Fierce clashes continue in Al-Hudaydah, including intense fighting, shelling and air strikes in Al-Hudaydah city over the past several days. More than 570,000 people have been forced from their homes across the Al-Hudaydah governorate since fighting escalated in the end of June. Due to ongoing clashes, the eastern road from Al-Hudaydah city to Sana'a remains blocked, which impacts trade and convoys from the key ports that serve all the population centres of northern Yemen.

Clashes have also continued to block access to a milling facility that contains enough aid-financed grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month, and several humanitarian warehouses in the Al-Hudaydah area have now been occupied for over two months.

The parties to the conflict continue to violate international humanitarian law. Since late May, more than 5,000 separate violations have been recorded, including mass civilian casualties and destruction or damage to critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, electricity, water systems, markets, roads and bridges. Delays in issuing visas, restrictions on the importation of equipment and cargo, retractions of permits, interference in humanitarian assessment exercises, interference in monitoring and other obstructions all limit the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide life-saving assistance to innocent civilians. In the absence of a cessation of hostilities, especially around Al-Hudaydah, where fighting for more than four months now has damaged the key facilities and infrastructure on which the aid operation relies, the relief effort will ultimately be simply overwhelmed. The time surely has come for all parties to heed those warnings.

On the economy, the central problem, as I explained last month, is that Yemen is almost entirely reliant on imports for food, fuel and medicine. The available foreign exchange, from what little remains of oil exports, money sent home from Yemenis out of the country and international assistance, has been simply inadequate to finance adequate levels of import to support the population. Since 2015, the gross domestic product — the national income of Yemen — has shrunk by 50 per cent. More than 600,000 jobs have been lost and hundreds of thousands of civil servants and pensioners have not received regular payment since 2016. More than 1.5 million families are no longer receiving support through public safety nets and more than 80 per cent of Yemenis now live below the poverty line.

The collapse in the domestic economy has been partially — but only partially — mitigated by aid efforts, including generous funding this year from the Gulf, the United States, European countries and other donors, and that has allowed the United Nations and its partners to dramatically scale up relief efforts. Aid agencies continue to implement the world's largest humanitarian relief operation in Yemen. More than 200 organizations are working through the United Nations humanitarian response plan, and we have delivered assistance to each and every one of Yemen's 333 districts this year. As many as 8 million people a month are receiving life-saving assistance under the programme. But because the aid operation cannot conceivably meet the needs of all Yemenis, I called last month for an urgent and substantial injection of foreign exchange and the resumption of payments to pensioners

and key public sector workers, such as teachers and health professionals.

There have been constructive discussions on both those issues and indications of further support, especially from Gulf countries. Today's announcement that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will provide $70 million to cover allowances for 135,000 teachers all over the country is important. However, I fear that overall action in those areas still looks to be both too small and too slow to reverse the trajectory towards famine, so my plea is that those concerned address that as a matter of great urgency.

At the same time, the Government of Yemen appears to be planning further restrictions on traders importing essential commodities. Traders trying to import six key commodities — wheat, rice, sugar, milk, cooking oil and fuel derivatives — are now being told that, as a result of new Government regulations, they must secure lines of credit from the Central Bank. But only a handful of lines of credit have been issued since June, most of them in just the past few days. The enforcement of those regulations is already having an alarming effect. Two vessels carrying more than 29,000 metric tons of fuel have, at the Government's request, been refused entry into Yemen in recent days. Last month I described the impact of desperate fuel shortages. If current trends continue, water services and sanitation facilities will inevitably be either curtailed or cut off altogether.

The Government has announced that it intends to extend enforcement of the new regulations to food imports starting 9 November. Unless steps are taken to expedite the process or waive those planned new requirements, imports of key food commodities and fuel could, in our assessment, fall by one half. That would, for reasons I have already explained, be the death knell for countless innocent civilians, most of them women and children. Therefore, I call on all stakeholders to do everything possible to avert catastrophe. We urgently seek the support of the Council for action in five areas.

First, there must be a cessation of hostilities in and around all the infrastructure and facilities on which the aid operation and commercial importers rely. A humanitarian ceasefire would reflect the obligations of the parties to the conflict to uphold international humanitarian law and to do everything possible to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As we have previously made clear, the United Nations is ready to play an enhanced role in ensuring the appropriate use of key facilities, especially around Al-Hudaydah.

Secondly, we must protect the supply of food and essential goods across the country. Humanitarian and commercial imports must flow into all ports and onwards to their final destinations. That means lifting existing and planned restrictions on imports and keeping the main transport routes open and safe.

Thirdly, there needs to be a larger and faster injection of foreign exchange into the economy through the Central Bank, along with expediting credit for traders and the payment of pensioners and civil servants.

Fourthly, there must be an increase in funding and support for the humanitarian operation. Given projected increases in needs — potentially up to 14 million people, as I have said — and the inevitable lead times, aid agencies need additional resources now to start scaling up relief efforts.

Fifthly, with so many lives at stake, we call upon the belligerents to seize this moment to engage fully and openly with the Special Envoy to end the conflict. He and I talk about these issues all the time, and we have discussed the five asks I have set out before members of the Council today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I apologize to Mark Lowcock that a previous engagement delayed my arrival to the Chamber, but I thank him very much for another sobering briefing. It is very good that the United Nations can report swiftly to the Council, in line with resolution 2417 (2018), whenever the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflict contexts occur. In resolution 2417 (2018), the Council expressed its intention to give its full attention to such information that the Secretary-General provides, and as we on the Council all know, Yemen has been one of those issues that the Council follows very deeply and about which it is gravely concerned. I am pleased to see that the Ambassador has joined us today.

The numbers that Mark Lowcock has cited are truly horrifying. The scale is a very grave concern, and the fact that the crisis does not seem to be getting

better is also something that the Council needs to take a deep interest in. I will not repeat the figures, but the fact that they are in the millions ought to be very salutary for us to think about, and in particular the acute malnourishment of nearly 2 million children under the age of five is a warning call. I understand that nearly 400,000 of those children suffer from severe acute malnutrition. That is a life-threatening condition and it requires urgent treatment.

The highest number of severe acute malnutrition cases is in Al-Hudaydah governorate, where there are appropriateoximately 100,000 cases. After air strikes in late July resulted in damage to the main sanitation facility and water supply, suspected cholera cases almost doubled, and that of course increases the risk of a new wave of cholera. Only the humanitarian response is containing an outbreak like last year's and a further disruption of humanitarian operations could have, as Mark said, catastrophic consequences.

Mark asked for increased funding and more support to humanitarian operations. The efforts of the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are welcome. As for the United Kingdom, we are determined to play our part. On World Food Day, 16 October, the United Kingdom announced a package of over $125 million, which we hope will help UNICEF tackle malnutrition in Yemen. But funding alone will not be enough to address the growing risk of famine. We need urgent action on the part of all parties on the economy, imports and access, and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. I want to highlight four issues in particular.

First, with regard to the economy, we share the concern about the rapid depreciation of the Yemeni rial. Soaring prices are putting several basic commodities out of reach for many Yemenis, and the Central Bank is struggling to pay public sector salaries. We look to the Government of Yemen and the Central Bank to take urgent action to stabilize the rial, for example by issuing promised letters of credit to Yemeni commercial food importers. Until that happens, we also suggest that the Government of Yemen pause the implementation of Decree 75, which is preventing staple goods, such as wheat, cooking oil and rice, from getting into the country at a time when they are most needed.

Secondly, unhindered access for commercial and humanitarian food and fuel into and throughout Yemen is essential if famine is to be avoided. The conflict is cutting off important transport routes, including the main route between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a, and alternatives have become more congested and more vulnerable. For their part, the Houthis should stop interfering with the humanitarian response so that food, fuel and medicines can reach those most in need throughout the north.

Thirdly, it is essential that military operations be conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law. This includes the protection of civilians and the protection of civilian infrastructure. We have consistently made this clear in the Council, but I repeat it again today. Not only is it important that military operations proceed with regard to the principles of proportionality, precaution and distinction, but it is also the case that further damage to food infrastructure, such as mills and wheat silos, threatens already fragile food supplies.

Fourthly and lastly, as we have made clear, only a political settlement will enable the worsening humanitarian crisis to be properly addressed and will bring long-term stability to Yemen. We call on all parties once again to engage constructively and in good faith with the Special Envoy's efforts to bring about a political settlement. We look forward to hearing from Martin Griffiths again in the Council. We last heard from him on 11 September (see S/PV.8348) following disappointing news from Geneva. We support his efforts, which have continued since then, and we look forward to further updates in the coming weeks on progress towards reaching agreement between the parties on confidence-building measures and a broader framework agreement.

With regard to the four points that Mark made — some of which I have covered now — I think they deserve very urgent consideration by the Council.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock, for his briefing to the Council on the latest developments pertaining to the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

I will focus in my statement on two issues: developments in the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and political and security developments.

First, with regard to developments in the humanitarian situation, we are greatly concerned by warning of the imminent danger of food insecurity in

Yemen, as detailed by Mr. Lowcock in his briefing. More than 3.5 million of our Yemenis brothers are facing the threat of food insecurity. The continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen is the inevitable result of the ongoing armed conflict, which affects the economy sector first and foremost. In the light of the non-payment of salaries and the unprecedented depreciation of the Yemeni rial against foreign currencies, the international community has a major responsibility to support the Yemeni Government in order to ensure that it succeeds in stopping the depreciation of the national currency.

The international community must also support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, including confidence-building measures, to unify the Yemeni financial institutions, the foremost of which is the Central Bank, with a view to establishing new mechanisms to collect revenues from different Yemeni regions in order to pay the salaries, which undoubtedly would help to alleviate humanitarian suffering.

In that regard, we commend the support provided recently by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Yemeni Central Bank through its deposit of $200 million, thereby increasing its total deposits to approximately $3.2 billion. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, has also provided $70 million to support the payment of teacher salaries in Yemen, in coordination with UNICEF.

Secondly, with regard to political and security developments, our meeting today to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen is an expected result of the coup against the legitimate Government of Yemen, led by the Houthis, who took control of most State institutions by military force. The Houthis have refused to cooperate with any political effort to end the crisis, as seen recently by their absence from the consultations that were supposed to take place in Geneva on 6 September and were fully supported by the Council.

The Houthis also continue to deliberately obstruct humanitarian assistance through seizures and looting. The Houthis have confiscated more than 690 relief trucks and more than 15,000 food baskets, and detained and stopped 84 oil and food vessels. As Mr. Lowcock said, the Houthis have also taken control of humanitarian warehouses in Al-Hudaydah.

In addition, the Houthis have taken control of Al-Hudaydah city and port and transformed them into a military operations zone, thereby preventing safe access to the grain silos and threatening to disrupt international navigation. The Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) has condemned Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and confirmed that such attacks violate international humanitarian law and may seriously affect access to humanitarian assistance and routes of commercial shipments.

We reiterate that the State of Kuwait stands ready to support and facilitate all international efforts aimed at prioritizing the political solution based on resolutions of international legitimacy. We also stand ready to facilitate the work of the Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and his ongoing efforts in order to gather all Yemeni parties at the dialogue table despite the security challenges, including the Houthi threat to regional peace and security posed by the targeting of the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with nearly 250 ballistic missiles and 67,000 explosive projectiles.

In conclusion, we underscore our support for the efforts of the Special Envoy. Any effort to end the crisis in Yemen must be based on a political solution in accordance with the three terms of reference: the Gulf Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the national dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), while ensuring the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen and non-interference in its internal affairs.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for his briefing. We are grateful to him and his team for their work to ease the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

China expresses its condolences to the Yemeni victims of tropical cyclone Luban and extends its sincere sympathy to their families. We wish a speedy recovery to all who are injured.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in locations such as Al-Hudaydah, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has worsened and the suffering of the people has increased. Despite the firm support of the international community, overall economic and social conditions in Yemen have continued to deteriorate. Basic public services such as medical care are dwindling. Food and

fuel prices, which affect people's livelihood, are on the rise and the threat of famine looms ever larger. Armed conflicts have increased civilian casualties, destroyed infrastructure and impeded access to humanitarian assistance — a situation that has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. The international community must take action with a view to alleviating the current grave humanitarian situation in Yemen. China would like to make the following points.

First, the parties to the conflict should create conditions for easing the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We urge them to abide by international law, cease hostilities, provide effective, safe and timely access for the delivery of humanitarian supplies, and guarantee the normal movement of commercial items. That will help to stabilize prices and ensure the timely distribution of humanitarian relief, thereby meeting the basic needs of the Yemeni people.

Secondly, the international community should continue to increase humanitarian assistance and provide medicine, food and other materials in a targeted manner to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. We appreciate the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme and other agencies to reduce the threat of cholera and famine, including the WHO delivery of cholera vaccines to more than half a million Yemenis in early October.

Thirdly, advancing the political process is the only fundamental and lasting solution to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The international community should step up its support for the mediation efforts of the United Nations and Special Envoy Griffiths to jointly push the parties to set aside their differences, pursue de-escalation, adopt confidence-building measures, such as releasing prisoners, relaunch face-to-face political dialogue as soon as possible, and establish a sustainable negotiation process.

In recent years, China has provided several tranches of assistance to Yemen, including food and medical supplies, through bilateral channels and in cooperation with international agencies. In July, President Xi Jinping announced a new assistance initiative for Yemen at the eighth ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. China will actively honour its commitments to helping alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We will continue to provide assistance to the Yemeni people to the best of our ability.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for having taken the initiative of convening this meeting in the extremely deteriorated humanitarian context of which we are all aware and which Mr. Lowcock has just described. His warnings and expectations are very clear, and we must all act with a sense of urgency in the light of what he told us. For months, we have seen the ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. War, extreme poverty and economic collapse have created such a high degree of systemic weakness of society and the State that we are today at the brink of catastrophe.

Since our last meeting in the Council a month ago (see S/PV.8361), the situation has been exacerbated by the continued fall of the rial, the ongoing fighting in Al-Hudaydah and a decline in the amount of foodstuffs unloaded in Al-Hudaydah since September. In addition, in the south-eastern province of Al-Mahrah, there was damage caused by tropical cyclone Luban. The result, as the Special Envoy described, is a risk of widespread famine that could affect more than 22 million people, a large-scale cholera epidemic and the possibility that several generations of Yemenis will be deprived of an education.

Secondly, in this extremely difficult situation, we must pursue our efforts to ensure respect of international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, and humanitarian and commercial access and delivery, as well as to promote the recovery of the Yemeni economy. Those points are included in the Council's 21 September presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/18) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We must implement them in Yemen. Two immediate concrete goals are to ensure the protection of civilians from bombing and artillery fire, particularly in a city as densely populated as Al-Hudaydah, and to allow civilians to move freely and safely. Civilian infrastructure must also be protected.

We must continue to strive to achieve other goals often mentioned in the Council.

First, we must protect humanitarian personnel, including those working in the rapid response mechanisms in Al-Hudaydah province and elsewhere in Yemen, who operate in a very dangerous environment. They must be able to plan their operations in advance and implement them safely. I once again convey to them the full support and admiration of France.

Secondly, humanitarian and commercial access must be ensured. The ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef must remain open and accommodate at least as many essential commodities — including food and fuel — as they did before December 2017. A solution is urgently needed so that the World Food Programme can access silos containing essential foods for the population and then transport them to Al-Hudaydah province and the rest of the country. The same is true for fuel. The main artery between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a must remain accessible, and we call on the parties to do everything in their power in that regard.

Finally, it is essential to intensify efforts to contain the soaring inflation of prices for food items, the collapse of the rial, and the lack of compensation for a large majority of Yemenis. There is an urgent need for progress in the negotiations led by the Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, with the Yemeni Government and the Houthi rebels on this topic, particularly with regard to the restoration of the Yemeni Central Bank. The work of the international financial institutions must also continue to make the recovery of the banking and financial system feasible.

In that context — and I will conclude here — France reiterates its call on the parties to engage fully with the Special Envoy in order to reopen the dialogue and move the political process forward. We know that only a political solution will make it possible to put a permanent end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. The search for that solution is becoming more and more urgent every day. United Nations mediation is the only way to revive discussions with a view to reaching an agreement on the management of the port of Al-Hudaydah, resuming talks, achieving a durable cessation of hostilities and defining the parameters for a political solution.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his sobering and concerning briefing. Let me also thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for its efforts on the ground and for its initiative in providing the Council with a warning on the increased threat of conflict-induced famine in Yemen.

OCHA's warning and this meeting of the Council are directly based on resolution 2417 (2018), on conflict and hunger, adopted earlier this year. OCHA's warning comes at a crucial point in time, when, following this summer's escalation of violence, the number of civilians killed in hostilities every month has almost tripled; when an economic depression is pushing millions people further below the poverty line; when cyclones threaten the lives of already extremely vulnerable civilians in Yemen; and when the Council's efforts to end the terrible conflict have proven to be insufficient.

Last week we hosted a photo exhibit in this building, with pictures of victims of conflict and hunger. Two severely malnourished babies from Yemen were among the victims shown. Those were two faces behind the staggering statistic of 172,000 severely malnourished children in Yemen. In that context, I will address three issues today: first, the threat of conflict-induced famine; secondly, the constraints on humanitarian access; and thirdly, the need for compliance with international humanitarian law.

With regard to my first point, Yemen is a clear example of the relationship between conflict and hunger. The reality of the more than 11 million Yemenis on the brink of famine is entirely man-made. The OCHA white paper on the increased threat of famine is a good example of the early warning we need to prevent a full-blown famine in Yemen, although in fairness, as Mark Lowcock said, this is not the first time the humanitarian community has warned us of the situation we are now facing. When the Council recognized the need to break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity with the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), it also committed itself to action. The Council committed itself to addressing those mad-made crises by enforcing man-made solutions. The parties to the conflict must take immediate steps and it is up to the international community, including the Council, to make sure that they follow through.

My second point concerns the persisting humanitarian access constraints the parties need to address. One month ago, OCHA provided the Council with concrete asks to all parties to the conflict that would help avert a famine. It is unconscionable that, since then, no discernible action has been taken by the parties involved. Today, let me be all the more clear about what we expect of the warring parties. Houthi-affiliated militia need to immediately abandon all humanitarian warehouses they have occupied for the past two months in Al-Hudaydah. The Yemeni Government needs to address with the utmost urgency the import delays caused by Decree 75 before imports of essential commodities decrease even further. Despite

clearances by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism, three essential fuel shipments were delayed in reaching Al-Hudaydah in recent weeks. Those delays must stop. The coalition needs to remove unnecessary commercial import restrictions, which have resulted in container shipments no longer serving Al-Hudaydah port since last year's blockade. Al-Hudaydah port should be open and fully functional. The Council has stated that repeatedly. The road connecting Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a needs to be open to humanitarian goods. We need a humanitarian ceasefire on the ground, as Mr. Lowcock requested. So far, the Council has been unified. Let us all unite behind the five asks Mr. Lowcock mentioned today.

That brings me to my third point — compliance with international humanitarian law. The conduct of hostilities continues to be a major contributing factor to the humanitarian crisis. Air strikes and shelling have killed scores of civilians. They have also hit hospitals and water sanitation facilities that Yemenis depend on for clean drinking water and to prevent cholera and other diseases. Reports of both the Panel of Experts on Yemen and the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen have highlighted the many transgressions by all parties to the conflict. In the absence of an end to the violence, their reporting continues to be crucial. We call on all parties to cooperate with them and allow them unimpeded access. Accountability is an essential ingredient for a peaceful and stable Yemen.

In conclusion, we call on the parties to take urgent steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis by implementing OCHA's asks before it is too late. Humanitarian actors on the ground warn us that anything short of a halt to hostilities may still be insufficient to avert a famine. We call on the parties to cease hostilities around humanitarian and commercial infrastructure, remove all access constraints and de-escalate. We further call on them to engage with the Special Envoy without preconditions.

Martin Griffiths' efforts towards a political solution continue to have our full support. The parties must shoulder their responsibility. If not, the Council, bearing in mind its commitment laid down in resolution 2417 (2018), must consider further steps. We need immediate and concrete action. Millions of lives depend on it. The people of Yemen depend on it. The children of Yemen depend on it.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Mark Lowcock for his very objective, yet alarming, briefing. We would like to express our gratitude for his efforts, his team and the activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Yemen.

I would also like to thank the United Kingdom for taking the initiative to convene this very timely meeting. It demonstrates the desperate urgency of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We have observed the continued deterioration of the living conditions of the Yemeni population, as just described by Mr. Lowcock. The situation of civilians is getting worse day by day, as Yemen is now on the brink of the worst famine. We are appalled by reports estimating that up to 4 million more Yemenis may become severely food insecure by the end of the year if conditions do not improve. The country may also face a new wave of the cholera epidemic, as the number of suspected cases has increased. The dire situation of Yemeni civilians continues to be exacerbated by the escalation of hostilities and attacks on civilian infrastructure.

We believe that the highly alarming situation of children in Yemen requires the special attention of the Council. Every 10 minutes a Yemeni child dies from entirely preventable war-related causes, and thousands have already been killed or injured as a result of conflict. Currently, almost every child in Yemen is in need of aid and, according to recent estimates, an additional 1 million children are now at risk of descending into famine. Those numbers are deeply disturbing and horrifying. We urge all parties to the conflict, as well as those with influence over them, to take immediate action to save Yemeni children from hunger and the atrocities of war.

We are also alarmed by the escalation of fighting in and around Al-Hudaydah, where an increase in air strikes, naval and ground shelling has resulted in scores of civilian casualties as well as damage to civilian infrastructure. The intensification of hostilities in Al-Hudaydah poses a major threat not only to the city and its inhabitants, but also to the critical lifeline for humanitarian assistance. The disruption of the strategic supply chain leading through Al-Hudaydah would have disastrous humanitarian consequences for millions of people across the country. It is therefore crucial to maintain the full functioning of the port and to ensure that all roads leading from Al-Hudaydah are accessible in order to enable basic commodities to be delivered.

The collapse of the economy and State structures is yet another factor contributing to the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. As a result of the rapid devaluation of the Yemeni rial, prices of basic commodities are skyrocketing and the purchasing power of millions of people is falling. Could any of us imagine being forced to live on less than $1 a day? In the light of such a tragic humanitarian situation, I would like to point to the provisions of the presidential statement adopted in March (S/PRST/2018/5) by the Council and to recall four important points. First, concrete steps must be taken to de-escalate the fighting and establish a durable cessation of hostilities. Secondly, safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be ensured. Thirdly, international humanitarian law must be respected and the protection of civilians ensured at all times. Lastly, immediate measures need to be taken to stabilize the economy and support the exchange rate. These issues are still very urgent.

In conclusion, the Council bears the responsibility for the situation in Yemen. It is time to take concrete action in order to bring the conflict to an end. We must stand united in our call to the parties to step up their engagement in an inclusive, United Nations-led political process without preconditions, so that a peaceful solution can soon be reached for the sake of the Yemeni people.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the United Kingdom delegation for initiating today's meeting. The situation in Yemen merits the Security Council's close attention. Mr. Lowcock has given us a depressing briefing on the situation in Yemen, where the world's worst humanitarian crisis is unfolding.

This is a structural crisis. It has done irreparable damage to the country's economy and population. The Emergency Relief Coordinator's dry statistics cannot convey the full force of the critical situation in Yemen. A majority of the population is in need of one or another kind of assistance. Millions of Yemenis are starving and have no access to essential medical services or medicines. The country is once again in the grip of a cholera epidemic. Getting humanitarian aid to Yemenis should be one of our priorities and should be provided on a non-discriminatory basis, regardless of who controls the territory where they live.

We call for a comprehensive cessation of the violence. We condemn the indiscriminate strikes on civilian targets. We advocate ensuring unconditional compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law and unfettered humanitarian access to all parts of the country. In order to achieve that, it will be essential to keep all of Yemen's seaports, including Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, as well as its airports, including Sana'a, open and functioning. It is important to ensure that there are no obstacles to the unimpeded movement of humanitarian and commercial goods traffic along the main routes linking the coast with the north of the country, where a major part of the population lives. Russia will continue to provide unpoliticized humanitarian assistance to Yemenis in both the north and south. We intend to continue working on a bilateral and multilateral basis, including through our regular contributions to the budget of the World Food Programme.

We operate on the principled position that it is impossible to improve the situation in Yemen through humanitarian measures alone and that a political solution is essential. The Security Council cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the Yemeni people and must work to influence the parties to the conflict, with the aim of achieving a rapid resumption of negotiations and agreeing on a ceasefire formula from which a sustainable political process can emerge. We support the mediation efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and believe that his initiative for launching the negotiation process is important. He continues to be in contact with all of the players involved through shuttle diplomacy. We are convinced that reaching agreement, particularly with regard to confidence-building measures, is still possible. We call on all parties to show restraint and refrain from resorting to force. The history of the conflict in Yemen has shown that militaristic approaches do not work. Maintaining calm around Al-Hudaydah and halting offensive actions should help Mr. Griffiths succeed. For our part, we will continue to assist the Special Envoy through our contacts with all of the stakeholders in the conflict, encouraging them to become actively involved in the United Nations mediation efforts.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize once again that whether we are talking about the Yemeni conflict or conflicts in other trouble spots in the region, these are all the result of the lack of a comprehensive and indivisible security architecture in the Middle East for both the Arab States in the Persian Gulf and Iran. Russia has long advocated for an initiative establishing

that architecture, which would enable us to exchange the current climate of threats and confrontation for one of dialogue and cooperation.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): We would like to express our profound appreciation to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for their untiring efforts to provide life-saving assistance in Yemen under extremely challenging conditions. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his briefing on those activities and to express our gratitude to the United Kingdom for calling for this essential meeting.

There can be no doubt that the humanitarian situation in Yemen and the suffering of the Yemeni people is still exceptionally worrying. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has noted that armed conflicts have intensified in Al-Hudaydah governorate, resulting in civilians being killed, injured or displaced, and in the destruction of civilian infrastructure. Overland access to the city of Al-Hudaydah remains limited, which affects humanitarian operations. Its port is vital to humanitarian aid, and it must remain open and functional. The extremely difficult humanitarian conditions have been further exacerbated by the rapid depreciation of the local currency, and the continued economic decline is pushing millions of Yemenis close to famine.

Already 75 per cent of the population requires food assistance. The non-payment of salaries has affected the already crumbling health service, increasing the probability of a major cholera epidemic. Thousands of people have been affected by the severe weather caused by Tropical Cyclone Luban. The situation has now amounted to the worst and biggest humanitarian crisis in the world today. All the reports and figures from the United Nations and humanitarian agencies warn that unless urgent and concerted efforts are taken, the already devastating humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate. In the meantime, we welcome today's announcement by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia that they will provide $70 million through UNICEF to pay teachers' salaries.

There are no options left. All parties must fully cooperate with the United Nations and its humanitarian partners so that much-needed aid reaches all of those in need. Safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access remains absolutely vital. The use of the port of Al-Hudaydah is critical, and the protection of civilians and civilian facilities must be given high priority.

For the sake of the surviving civilians, who have endured so much, we strongly appeal to all parties to exercise maximum restraint, according to established international humanitarian law. The international community should take urgent and coordinated action to address the distortions in the Yemeni economy. All of those measures are of major importance, but they will not be sufficient to sustainably address the unfolding humanitarian tragedy. The deep-rooted crisis in Yemen demands far more, most urgently, namely, a comprehensive political solution that addresses both the suffering of Yemenis and the concerns of the countries of the region. In that context, diplomacy must provide the prime response to finding a durable political solution, while respecting the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen.

It is very clear that the Yemeni crisis can be resolved only through a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned process, facilitated by the United Nations. We fully support the continued diplomatic efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths. We call upon all parties to constructively engage with the Special Envoy to fully reinvigorate the political process. The Council should also make clear its continued, full and comprehensive support for his tireless efforts.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening this meeting, and Mr. Lowcock for once again informing us about the devastating situation in Yemen.

We reiterate our deep regret at the continuation of the conflict in Yemen. Far from a non-existent military solution, the actions of the parties and their contempt for international law and international humanitarian law have aggravated what is already the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. We are facing the clear failure of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security and protecting 22 million vulnerable Yemenis.

The continuous bombings and terrorist attacks are compounded by recurring outbreaks of cholera and the worst famine that the world has seen in the past 100 years. Girls and boys are the most vulnerable and are the main victims of the conflict and the humanitarian crisis. It is estimated that thousands of children under the age of five could die as a result of malnutrition and disease in the remainder of the year alone. We believe that their abandonment by the international community

fosters the development of violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

Peru condemns the Houthi rebels and their crimes, including indiscriminate attacks against urban centres in Saudi Arabia, for which they will be held accountable. We also condemn the attacks carried out by members of the coalition against civilians and vital civilian infrastructure for dealing with cholera outbreaks. We are still awaiting the transparent and credible investigation requested by the Council to identify, prosecute and punish those responsible for the bombing of a bus that killed dozens of children last August. Impunity is not acceptable.

We note with alarm the prospect of an escalation in the city and port of Al-Hudaydah, which could further restrict access to the food, medicine and fuel required to meet humanitarian needs. Only one vessel carrying containers has entered that port since November of last year. We reiterate that ports, airports and land routes must remain open and operational, as provided for in the Council's presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/5) in March. Likewise, humanitarian aid and the population's access to such aid cannot and should not be conditioned by any military objective.

In view of that, we reiterate our support for the efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to restore dialogue among the parties. We also wish to convey, through Mr. Lowcock, our support for the humanitarian work of the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies, whose capacities are overstretched by the scale of the humanitarian crisis. As has been noted, the battle against famine is being lost. In that context, it is vital that the international community also contribute to financing humanitarian activities, controlling inflation and stabilizing the local currency, facilitating the imports of basic goods and kick-starting the economy.

I conclude by noting that Council members, in particular those with influence over the parties, can and should do more to protect the population without resorting to double standards or strategic considerations. Peru emphasizes the urgent need for a cessation of hostilities that allows free access to food and humanitarian aid, as well as the need for the Yemeni parties to negotiate a political solution. The time to act is now. We cannot continue to be passive bystanders to this tragedy.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): Allow me to start by expressing our condolences and sympathies to the Government and the people of Yemen following the devastating tropical cyclone.

I also want to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his update and for having drawn our attention to the acute food crisis — indeed famine — in Yemen, as foreseen in resolution 2417 (2018). Mark Lowcock and the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, Lise Grande, have our wholehearted support in their efforts, as do all United Nations personnel and humanitarians in Yemen, who are working under what we understand are extremely challenging and difficult circumstances.

I want to focus mainly on the economic crisis and the military escalation in Yemen — two factors that are aggravating the humanitarian disaster that has been the predictable, but not inevitable, effect of the conflict being played out in Yemen.

First, on the economy, the numbers presented today are staggering. As we have heard, if the current economic crisis continues, an additional 5.6 million people could risk severe food insecurity in the coming months. That would add to the individual catastrophe of millions and bring the total number of people in pre-famine conditions to 14 million. That famine is the result of a man-made situation that occurred before our eyes and on our watch.

To help reverse those trends, we support Mr. Lowcock's call today for urgent measures to stabilize the Yemeni economy. Those include expanding liquidity to stabilize the currency, expediting applications for lines of credit for importers of core commodities and holding back on restrictions in that area, and ensuring the payment of civil servants — teachers as a first step — as well as pensioners in the northern part of the country. We welcome today's announcement that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will provide teacher allowances across the country, and we heard Mr. Lowcock's further recommendations in that area.

However, and turning now to my second point, on the military escalation, those economic measures are far from enough. The economic collapse and food security crisis is not happening in a vacuum; it is a direct consequence of the ongoing conflict and is aggravated by the current military escalation. That connection is painfully apparent in Al-Hudaydah, where the fighting is not only causing civilian casualties but is also affecting both aid operations and commercial imports.

We remain particularly concerned about the continued fighting on the main road to Sana'a, as it is impacting the vital supply chain and life-line to northern Yemen, as well as the occupation of humanitarian warehouses and the blocked access to the vital milling facility.

The Security Council has once again today been put on high alert, and we have a responsibility to respond. Based on resolution 2417 (2018), which addresses conflict-induced food insecurity, and as agreed in our presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/5) earlier this year, it is now time to come together and make equally critical and urgent demands. First, a durable ceasefire is needed, at least for the purpose set out by Mr. Lowcock. Secondly, we must provide safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need, with ports and key roads kept open and functioning, including Al-Hudaydah and Saleef. Commercial imports should also be maintained and expanded to reach all ports. Thirdly, there must be respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances, including by protecting civilians, medical, humanitarian and United Nations personnel across the country and meeting the basic needs of the civilian population. Fourthly, the Council should urgently call in good faith on the parties to engage in a United Nations-led inclusive political process.

As a Council, we should step up our efforts to support Mr. Griffiths in his commendable efforts. If we are serious about our constant call that there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen, then only through a negotiated political solution will this war and the immense suffering that it has caused the people of Yemen come to an end.

Mr. Sipaco Ribala (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting the convening of this meeting on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, as well as Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for the detailed briefing that he just delivered.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its concern stated barely one month ago (see S/PV.8361) about the hostilities that the Yemeni people are suffering, hostilities that are increasingly exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Three years of uninterrupted conflict and the consequent economic decline have exhausted coping mechanisms and the livelihoods of the population, thereby exerting enormous pressure on the institutions that provide essential basic services, causing irregularities and interruptions in salary payments and interrupting the provision of operating costs for social facilities.

Approximately 1.25 million civil servants have not received wages, or have only received them intermittently, since August 2016. It is estimated that that wage gap is affecting one quarter of the population, including public officials and their families, leaving them without a regular income at a time of scarcity and rising prices, according to a report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

There is an urgent need for the international community to find a support strategy to stop the continued deterioration of the Yemeni rial, which has more than halved in value since the beginning of the conflict, creating more development problems for the population. In that regard, we trust the words of Mr. Griffiths, who this month in Abu Dhabi hinted at a possible master plan entailing a set of concerted measures among the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the agencies of the United Nations, the Gulf countries and the Yemeni Government.

For the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the security of airports and ports, which are gateways for humanitarian aid and goods, is another very disturbing issue. In that regard, and in compliance with international humanitarian law, the warring parties must refrain from carrying out acts that prevent regular access to those supplies, in addition to guaranteeing their safe transport to distribution sites, while ensuring that they reach all those in need.

Since April of last year, very recent data shows 1.2 million alleged cases of cholera and more than 2,500 deaths associated with the disease, making this one of the worst outbreaks in recent history. In that regard, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes and congratulates the joint efforts, supported by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, that have just led to the conclusion of a robust vaccination campaign, vaccinating hundreds of thousands of people. We hope that that approach will help to limit the spread of the pandemic.

Before concluding, my delegation once again urges the parties to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law and guarantee the protection of civilian infrastructure and the rights of civilians, so that the Yemeni population can find a way out of the

crisis and return to their homes. Moreover, we ask that all the parties involved in the conflict participate in the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and resume negotiations to reach a political solution, given that frank and inclusive dialogue among the parties is the only way to end the conflict.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): We join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock for his comprehensive update on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and we convey our readiness to extend our full support to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the country. We also express our deep appreciation to Mr. Lowcock and, through him, the staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for working tirelessly in one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. My delegation has closely followed the recent developments and would like to make the following observations.

Kazakhstan strongly supports the United Nations call on all parties to safeguard civilian lives, prevent deaths and injuries, allow freedom of movement and protect hospitals, clinics and schools, in accordance with international humanitarian law and human rights law. In that regard, we welcome the coordinated efforts of stakeholders, namely, the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Gulf countries, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Al-Hudaydah. We endorse the United Nations call on all parties to uphold international humanitarian law and refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

All parties to the conflict should facilitate the continuation and expansion of commercial imports into all ports, including by addressing the delays linked to Yemeni Government Decree 75 and other restrictions. That will ensure that critical supplies can travel safely and quickly along all routes. Presently, the volume of commercial imports through the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef continue to be below the needs of the population. Regrettably, access throughout the country is still impeded by the ongoing fighting, procedural checkpoints and the destruction of infrastructure.

We envisage a worsening situation if parties do not refrain from committing acts that may lead to an escalation of regional tension and insecurity. My delegation therefore urges all parties to immediately contribute to de-escalating violence and ending the offensive on Al-Hudaydah, as well as an unconditional ceasefire. All sides must find compromises and reject unilateral decisions that could harm the peace process, in order to prevent the potential break-up of the country.

We support Mr. Lowcock's call and acknowledge the importance of concerted action to address distortions in the Yemeni economy, including by supporting the currency, injecting liquidity, expediting lines of credit for importers and paying pensioners and civil servants. In that regard, we welcome today's announcement by the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of a contribution of $70 million through UNICEF to pay the salaries of teachers in Yemen, including in Houthi-controlled areas.

Kazakhstan would like to draw the Security Council's attention to the plight of 1.8 million children under the age of five, who are acutely malnourished and for whom immediate assistance must be mobilized. That is especially critical in the light of a new nationwide wave of cholera. The destruction of water supplies must therefore be prevented at all costs. Women, youth and civil society organizations need to be encouraged to play a critical role at the grassroots level, not only to alleviate suffering but also to become peacemakers and agents of change.

Finally, Kazakhstan expresses its unconditional support for the Special Envoy's efforts and urges parties to engage in good faith and without preconditions in the political process. We also call upon the parties to the conflict to demonstrate flexibility, avoid disagreements and properly resolve complex issues. We fully agree with the words of Secretary-General Guterres that "a negotiated political settlement through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue" (*S/PV.8231, p. 2*) is the only solution. All measures must proceed in that direction.

Mr. Ipo (Côte D'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting on the humanitarian situation in Yemen and thanks Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his very thorough briefing on the latest developments in the country's humanitarian situation.

According to United Nations reports, Yemen is now facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Millions of children and families across Yemen may soon find themselves without food, clean drinking water and sanitation due to the continued conflict, particularly the fighting around the port city of Al-Hudaydah and the worsening economic crisis. An

additional 1.2 million people might soon need basic water and sanitation assistance, according to estimates by humanitarian agencies. Families who can no longer afford basic staples could soon join the 18.5 million people already affected by food insecurity.

Côte d'Ivoire remains particularly concerned about continued fighting, particularly around the port of Al-Hudaydah, the main gateway to approximately 90 per cent of humanitarian aid and 70 per cent of the country's imports. The clashes over control of that strategic port are hampering the delivery of humanitarian aid and causing the prices of basic necessities to soar.

Given the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, Côte d'Ivoire calls on all the parties to cease hostilities immediately. Convinced that there is no alternative to a political settlement of the crisis in Yemen, my country urges the warring parties to resume negotiations under the Special Envoy's peace plan. My country also calls on conflicting parties to remove all obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in need.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire encourages the parties to the conflict to take ownership of the peace plan proposed by Mr. Griffiths. We welcome the work he has done and call on him to continue his mediation for an effective resumption of inter-Yemeni dialogue.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): Let me add our voice to those thanking Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for his deeply concerning, sobering and important briefing today. We are very grateful for his hard work and the work that his team does on the ground in Yemen every day.

The stories behind the huge number of people affected by the crisis have become all too familiar: babies ravaged by hunger, too weak to cry, and parents choosing between critical medical care for a child or food for their family. Now, as the Under-Secretary-General argued, continued deterioration and newly acute risk are apparent in every grim update, most recently in the reports of over 20,000 newly displaced people in northern Yemen, due to fighting in the area.

There are alternatives to that situation. The suffering of the Yemeni people is not inevitable. But unless the fighting stops and there are immediate efforts to stabilize the Yemeni rial, then the suffering of those who are already severely food insecure in Yemen will continue to worsen. In that regard, no one has worked harder or more tirelessly to bring about a political solution than Special Envoy Griffiths. He has our full support and we need him to succeed.

Until we achieve a political solution, we implore all the parties to take the measures necessary to protect civilians and critical civilian infrastructure and to ensure unfettered access for humanitarian goods and personnel and the movement of essential commercial goods. The parties must adhere to their obligations under international law and recognize that damage to ports and other civilian infrastructure will further drive food insecurity. In that regard, we urge parties to consider all possible measures to further mitigate and reduce unnecessary suffering from the conflict. We thank the United Nations for its efforts to maintain a de-confliction mechanism in that context to allow aid and commercial goods to flow despite the fighting.

We share the Under-Secretary-General's assessment that humanitarian assistance, especially in the past year, has been critical in staving off the worst outcomes and mitigating Yemeni suffering. The United States is one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance to Yemen, having provided more than $1.2 billion in humanitarian aid since fiscal year 2017, including food, medical care, safe drinking water, shelter, psychosocial support and supplies to fight the spread of disease. The United States contributions to the World Food Programme operations have also been vital.

However, as the Under-Secretary-General said, we can and must do more. And so we are. In addition to continued humanitarian relief, we are expanding non-humanitarian assistance to address the consequences of conflict, including supporting efforts to enhance the Central Bank of Yemen's ability to function, so that it can begin to address Yemen's deteriorating economic situation and the currency depreciation that has made it even harder for Yemenis to afford to survive.

We will continue all those efforts, and hope that all parties will also recognize and help to respond to the suffering. At the same time, there is simply no alternative to a political solution. The dire situation that the Under-Secretary-General described is yet another reminder that this war and the suffering of the Yemeni people can end only at the negotiating table, not on the battlefield.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the United Kingdom for having taken the initiative to request this meeting. We are also grateful for not only the briefing delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock, but also the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

After having listened to Mr. Lowcock once again in this Chamber, we can reaffirm that not only the international community, but also the Council, has been warned. We cannot plead ignorance for what is happening in Yemen. I have listened carefully to each and every speaker and several words have been repeatedly used to describe the situation in Yemen: horrendous, horrifying, catastrophic consequences, imminent famine, cholera, war, extreme poverty, vicious clashes and economic collapse, to name a few.

My delegation expresses its serious concern at the delicate humanitarian situation caused by the continuing escalation of violence in Yemen, especially the intensification of bombings, air strikes and the launching of missiles against civilian populations. Unfortunately, those armed clashes, which have spread beyond the airport, have affected the tenth and sixteenth kilometres of the main road connecting the cities of Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a, making it almost impossible to use the road to transport goods and humanitarian aid. The clashes have also disabled access to the Red Sea Mills, one of the most important granaries in Yemen, with the capacity to store enough grain to feed 3.5 million people per month.

Moreover, the cholera outbreak represents a major concern, since it has infected more than 1.2 million people in 22 of the 23 governorates of Yemen and has caused more than 2,500 deaths since it started to spread in April last year. Unfortunately, the damage to water treatment facilities and plants, particularly in Al-Hudaydah, has increased the risk of outbreaks of cholera and other diseases. In September alone there were 13 cases of diphtheria and two deaths due to the disease.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the number of civilian victims who have died or have been seriously injured as a result of the clashes and attacks against civilian spaces and infrastructure amounts to more than 16,000 people, of whom more than 2,400 are children. Unfortunately, that chilling statistic is only increasing, given that since June there have been more than 170 fatalities and at least 1,700 injuries in the governorate of Al-Hudaydah alone.

Unfortunately, war, disease and hunger are not the only challenges the Yemeni people must face, as, over the past month, the governorate of Al-Mahrah, in the south-east of the country, has been affected by Cyclone Luban, as was mentioned by some Council members, which caused floods affecting more than 3,000 families, claimed the lives of 11 people and left 124 people injured. That situation exacerbates the urgent need for humanitarian assistance required by the population to survive.

Given all that has been said, we recall that more than 70 per cent of the imports and humanitarian assistance that enter Yemen do so by the port of Al-Hudaydah. Therefore, any kind of attack or military campaign against that city or port would not only seriously affect the more than 22 million people who currently require humanitarian assistance but, according to the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, Ms. Lise Grande, it would raise that number to an untenable level, dangerously increasing the number of people at risk of famine from 8 million to 13 million.

The military actions in Yemen only serve to undermine and weaken the efforts of our Organization and those of the Special Envoy to establish a dialogue that brings the parties closer to achieving a negotiated solution to the conflict. For that reason, we call on all the actors and parties involved to cease violence immediately, guarantee the integrity of Al-Hudaydah port and its access roads, abandon any preconditions to establishing dialogue and implement resolution 2216 (2015), thereby laying the foundation for a political solution that satisfies the demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people within the framework of respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Finally, my delegation supports the process of consultations and dialogue initiated by the Special Envoy as an important initiative to guide the process of political negotiation that allows for the peaceful resolution of the situation in Yemen. We therefore reiterate our call to the actors and parties involved to join and contribute constructively to the process.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Binmubarak (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish you and the friendly delegation of Bolivia every success. I also want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak before the Council.

I would like as well to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing and for his efforts and those of his team in Yemen.

The priority of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security by honouring United Nations resolutions, standards and international laws, not by imposing a reality on the Yemeni people, as some are trying to do. The Security Council must continue to play its role as a body concerned with maintaining international peace and security, and work on implementing its resolutions so that the Council can preserve its credibility in addressing any threat to international peace and security.

The Council has been present throughout the stages of the political process in Yemen since 2011. Together we have made great strides towards ending the Yemeni crisis that has been killing our citizens. That progress has been made in accordance with the agreed terms of reference: the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the national dialogue and relevant Security Council resolutions, notably resolution 2216 (2015).

As members know, the delegation of the Houthi militias chose not to attend the Geneva consultations. However the Yemeni Government has supported and continues to support the efforts of the Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We stand ready to support his efforts in good faith — given the right conditions — in any initial consultations that could represent a true step forward in the Yemeni peace process and attain a sustainable solution to the Yemeni crisis. As we discuss the humanitarian situation in Yemen, we must take into account the following points.

First, the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people over the past three years is the result of a wanton coup against the State. All Yemen's civil and military institutions were hijacked by extremist ideological militias that do not understand the meaning of human rights, but instead only exploit human rights whenever it suits their ideological and extremist ideas and serves the interests of their rogue leaders working as regional agents for Iran and Hizbullah.

Since 21 September 2014, my country has been in a dark tunnel because of the Houthi militias. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated in Yemen although the political process had been moving steadily forward, with the support of the countries of the region and the international community, towards achieving security and stability and building a civilian, democratic, federal State where human rights are respected, the dignity of women and youth is protected, and the rights of the child and all vulnerable segments of society are protected, and the principles of justice and equality are honoured. However, the militias chose to violate all humanitarian laws and values by launching an aggression against the Yemeni people that spared no one — not journalists, college professors, children, women or even the Jewish and Baha'i communities, which is unprecedented in our history.

Secondly, the Houthi militias perpetrated all forms of killing, torture, forceful displacement of civilians in all Yemeni cities occupied by force, including the city of Taiz, whose citizens still suffer to this day, and other Yemeni cities. Civilians are still suffering from landmines planted by the Houthi militias, which have claimed the lives of thousands, including women and children. The number of landmines planted by the militias is now some 2 million, and the number of victims from June 2017 to June 2018 totalled 937 killed and 2,013 injured.

Thirdly, as long as the conflict persists, the Yemeni people will continue to suffer, and the militias will continue to violate the rights of the Yemeni people. They will continue to recruit children, force them to drop out of school and send them to the battlefronts. They will continue to exploit the difficult economic situation of Yemeni families and use orphanages and youth centres to recruit children to fight in their ranks. The number of children soldiers now stands at 20,000, with 1,316 casualties, including 552 were killed and 764 suffering from permanent disability.

Fourthly, the militias have not only perpetrated those crimes, but also assaulted humanitarian and aid workers according to reports from aid organizations. They have detained and prevented the entry of 84 aid vessels carrying food and oil. They have targeted seven aid and commercial vessels in the Red Sea and looted more than 696 trucks carrying aid. They are even selling

food items and humanitarian assistance on the black market and giving them to the poor in exchange for fighting in their ranks. They have detonated four trucks and killed two drivers. Last September, those militias broke into the silos of the World Food Programme in Al-Hudaydah and kidnapped two workers. They burned the silos and destroyed over 4,000 tonnes of food items. They prevented the unloading of 11,979 tonnes of diesel and 84,326 tonnes of petroleum in Al-Hudaydah seaport.

Everyone knows the grave violations of the Houthis in the areas under their control. Last month, Human Rights Watch documented a number of violations against innocent civilians who were kidnapped and taken hostage in an immoral and arbitrary way, in grave violation of international law and international humanitarian law. Since 2014, that organization has documented dozens of cases of kidnapping, forced detainment and disappearance, as well as torture, in addition to hundreds of cases documented by Yemeni human rights organizations. The Houthis are not only perpetrating such blatant violations to silence their political opponents and critics; they are also using kidnapping and torture as blackmail to extract money from innocent civilians in exchange for releasing their loved ones.

Houthi militias have been torturing, beating, hanging and removing the nails of detainees and threatening to rape them or their families in order to force innocent civilians and their families to pay a ransom in exchange for their release. The detainees have started to wish they were dead. Last month, those militias detained 17 girls at Sana'a University. They assaulted them for merely participating in a protest against the policy of starvation adopted by the militias against civilians in their areas of control. They also assaulted their families when they called for their release, in a manner not seen in Yemen prior to the emergence of those outlaw militias.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its commitment to international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. We ask that all those who violate such laws be held to account. We underscore the importance of working and coordinating with the relevant entities and of opening offices for United Nations agencies working to provide humanitarian assistance in the temporary capital of Aden and other main cities, so as to ensure the decentralization of humanitarian work so that it is not affected by complicated military operations. It would also ensure that militias do not exploit silos and use them as a cover to perpetrate military attacks in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, or plant landmines that impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance and endanger the lives of civilians. Humanitarian assistance must be provided to those in need.

We must also address the difficult economic situation my country faces as a result of the war and the fact that Houthi militias have taken control of my country's resources, including its internal and external reserves. That has a grave impact on the lives of the citizens. The Government of the Republic of Yemen, represented by His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, has therefore sought to restore and revive Yemen's economy. We have taken a number of essential and inevitable executive measures and decisions in order to adapt to the exceptional situation.

The Central Bank took several measures to meet the needs of primary goods importers, such as implementing a fixed foreign exchange rate policy, funded by a Saudi deposit, within a period not exceeding 15 days from the date of submission of the application. We also took the decision to provide $100 million to the Central Bank in order to cover the needs of small traders whose applications amount to less than $200,000. We provided $15 million to meet the needs of the Yemeni oil company to help it restore market balance by selling oil at suitable prices. We also took measures to limit the impact of the black market created by Houthi militias, organize requests for foreign currency and ensure the stability of our national currency and prevent the rial depreciation. That would enable us to provide primary goods and their derivatives to our citizens.

Pertaining to the measures that Mr. Lowcock addressed, our economic committee announced today that it would postpone the implementation of the executive mechanism related to credit-line measures on importing commodities. We announced that we would hold a workshop with Yemeni entrepreneurs and listen to their views in a way that would facilitate the entry of essential goods and commodities.

In that regard, we look forward to the vital role that will be played by the United Nations and other donor countries and institutions to ensure the stability of Yemen's currency by providing assistance to Yemen in foreign currency and transfers via the Central Bank, similar to the action taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On behalf of the Government and the people

of Yemen, we would like to thank the countries of the Arab coalition, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, other donors and the United Nations for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, the latest of which was a $70 million grant from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in coordination with UNICEF, to pay teacher salaries. I take this opportunity to call on all donors to meet their obligations under the framework of the 2018 humanitarian response plan for Yemen. The humanitarian situation in Yemen should be enough to turn the Council's words into action.

We appreciate all of the international community's humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. However, we believe that the suffering is man-made. There will be no sustainable solution to the crisis unless we first address the root causes of the problem in Yemen — that is, the coup d'état perpetrated by the Houthis — by finding a peaceful and comprehensive political solution, based on the terms of reference and on Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015).

We fear that these meetings of the Council will become routine. At meetings, Council members refer to statistics, numbers and victims, but, once meetings adjourn, that information loses meaning. As the Council is unable to exert pressure on militias to compel them to submit to international will and implement resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, it must send a clear message to the Houthi militias that underscores that the international community will not remain silent while they perpetrate crimes and violations and cause prolonged humanitarian suffering. They must opt for either sustainable and genuine peace or face the Yemeni people and the international community.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.